conveyed that they would need Government of India counter guarantee for State Electricity Boards' payment obligations in order to arrange finances from the international lenders.

(b) It has been agreed in principle to extend counter guarantee to the seven projects approved by the Government from the foreign investment angle. These include a project promoted by a British company as well, namely, Vishakapatnam Thermal Power Project by Ashok Leyland and National Power, U. K.

Maintenance of Telecom System in Bihar

*240. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have issued directions for maintenance of telephone lines and telephone service in the rural areas of Bihar during 1994-95;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken in this regard;

(c) whether Government have received representation regarding Banka, Devghar and Bhagalpur divisions in Bihar in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MNISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes Sir. The Government have issued detailed instructions to all the field units including Bihar regarding the preventive and corrective measure to be taken for the satisfactory maintenance of telephone services.

(b) Regular monitoring of the vairous performance indicators has commenced and accordingly preventive and corrective measures are being taken as and when found necessary.

(c) and (d) While no representation in this regard has been received, during the meeting between Members of Parliament and the Chief General Manager (Telecom) Bihar Circle on 7.7.94, the problem about incoming STD facility at Banka in Bihar was raised and the fault has since been rectified. However, no specific complaint has been received for Devghar and Bhagalur.

Telephone facility in villages

1883. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that out of 5.8 lakh villages in the country only 1.5 lakh are covered by telephone facility;

(b) whether it in also a fact that to connect each of these villages through phone by the year 2000 AD a sum of Rs. 4,000 crores is required;

(c) whether it is also a fact that due to htavy investment and resource crunch, Government propose to involve Multinational Corporations in this matter; and

(d) if so, what is their reaction to the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir. As per status on 31-7-1994, out of a total of 6,03,594 villages in the country, 1,46,136 villages have been covtred by telephone facility.

(b) Yes, Sir. As per National Telecom Policy, all the villages would be connected by phone by 1997 and requirement of a sum of Rs. 4,000 crores in anticipated.

(c) No, Sir. As per National Telecom Policy 1994, Companies registered in India will be allowed to participate in the area of basic telephone service with a view to supplement the effort of the Department of Telecommunications in providing telecommunications to the public.

(d) Question does not arise in view of reply to (c) abovt.